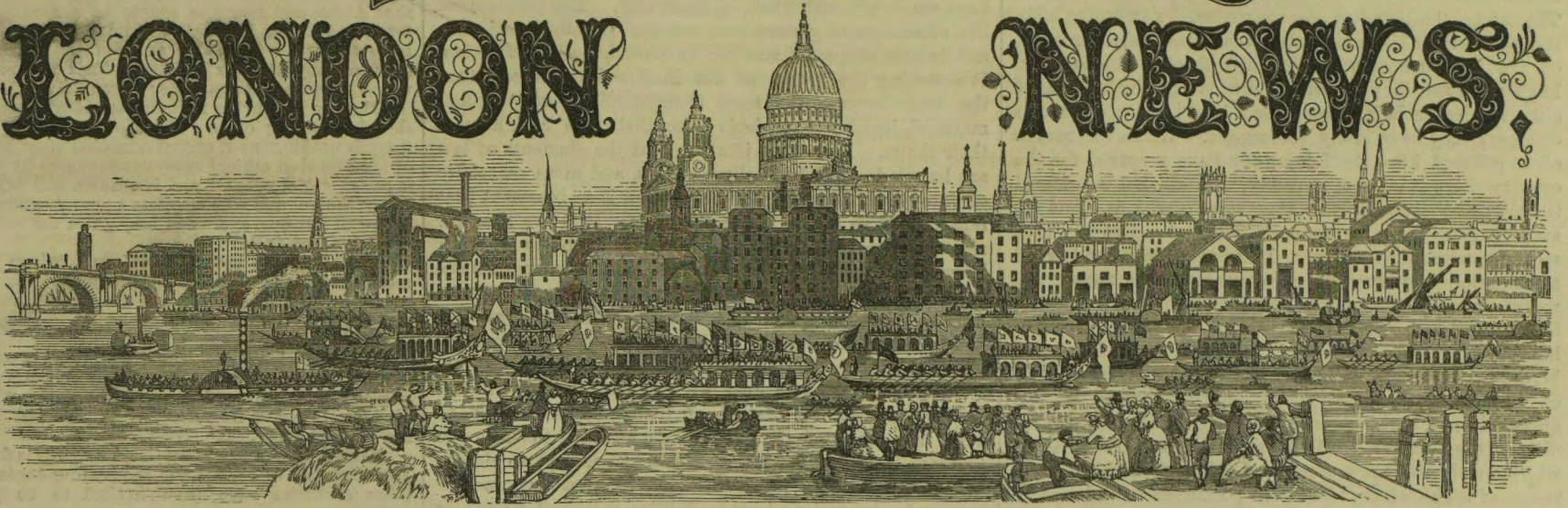


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STREET IN MORLAIX, BRITTANY.
SEE PAGE 176.

MORLAIX.

We give this week a few Engravings taken from the old Breton town of Morlaix. At this season of the year, when weary brains and over-wrought nerves are seeking their annual rest and recreation, it is almost vain surplusage to point out by pictorial representation that Brittany has its claim upon the lover of the picturesque, whether in scenery, buildings, or costume. Its coast, jutting out into the Atlantic, as if in rivalry of Cornwall, is freshened by the breezes that sweep over the ocean; and in its towns and villages the quaint attire and stranger tongue of its peasantry seem to transport one into a land that is wholly new and unlike anything to be seen elsewhere in the tourist grounds of Europe.

The little sea-port of Morlaix, in the department of Finistère, will well repay a visit, and will give a very excellent idea of Breton architecture, as well as of the habits and appearance of the simple peasantry. Not that it is so wholly antique and fantastic throughout as the street from which our larger Engraving is taken; for, alas for the picturesque! much that gave a character to the place and that art-heretics might profanely call old, dingy, and crazy, has given way to modern improvements. But Nature cannot be improved away or levelled to the tame and prosaic when once it has established a position for itself in the world. And Morlaix possesses the lasting charm of position, which, happily, cannot be modernised or reduced to the utilitarian pattern. Situated in a valley, its two sides support themselves



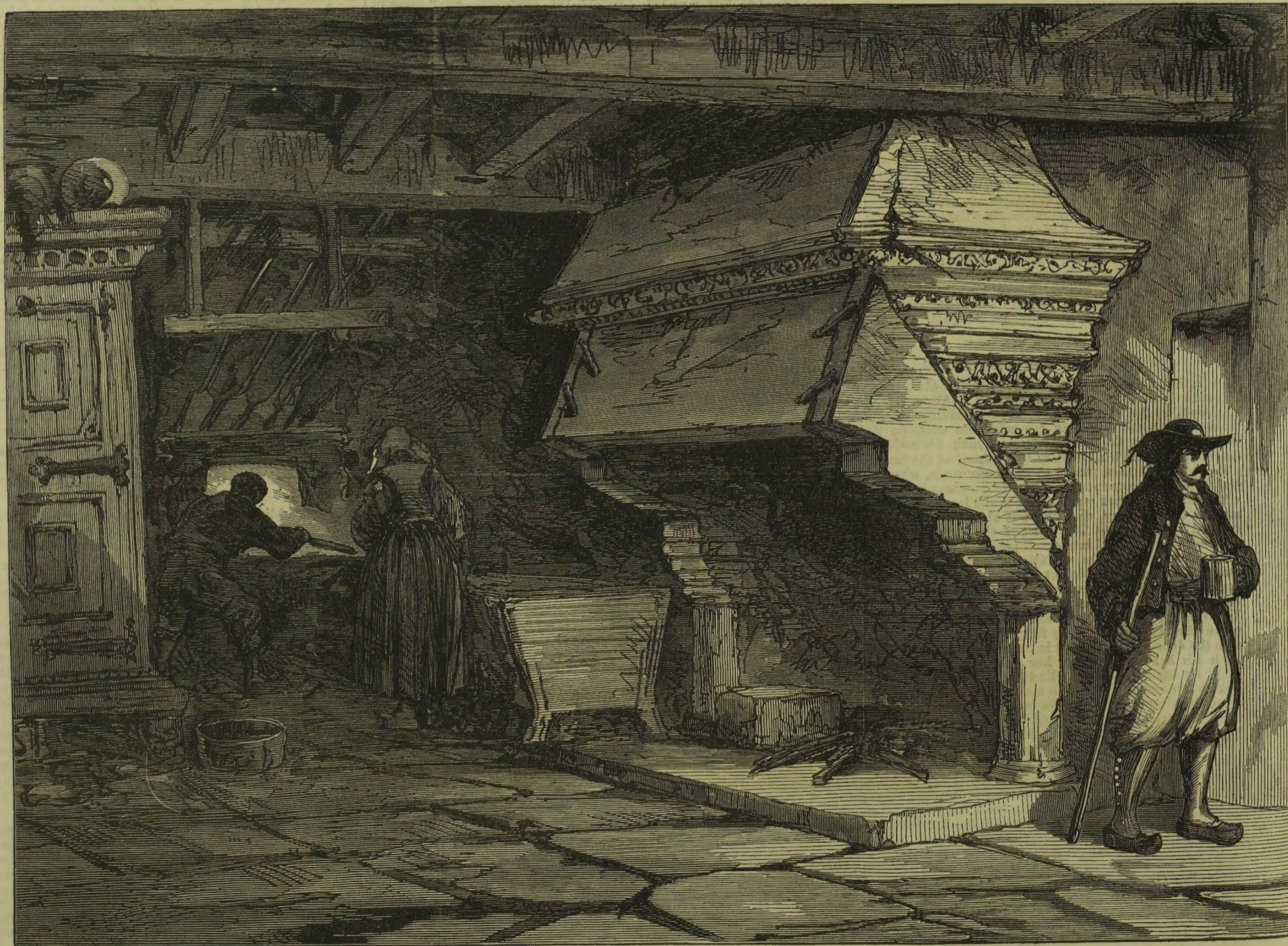
STREET IN MORLAIX, BRITTANY.

upon the rocky hills that form their background, or slope upwards, with terraced gardens, to the heights that look down upon the town. The houses, as the Engravings show, are built with projecting stories, surmounted by the gables peculiar to this style of domestic architecture, which is common throughout Brittany. So far do the topmost stories project in the narrow streets that they almost approach one another and darken the footways below, where the townsfolk, not yet acquainted with the modes de Paris, add to the fantastic appearance of the houses by the characteristic quaintness of the Breton costume.

Morlaix boasts of a large tobacco-manufacture, whose products, however, are not held in very high estimation by connoisseurs in that article. Be this as it may, it has also a manufacture of linen, and a considerable trade in various articles of consumption, especially in butter and honey. But its productions will not be the attraction which will draw to this and other towns of Brittany and Normandy the annual influx of English tourists, who gravitate to these two provinces of France as their forefathers in days gone by, when their visits were not so peaceful and their sojourn not so welcome.

"A BRETON GIRL: EVENING."

This Engraving is from a water-colour drawing (not hitherto exhibited) by Mr. F. J. Skill, who has recently been elected an Associate of the Institute of Painters in Water Colours. Mr. Skill is one of the numerous engravers and draughtsmen on wood



ANCIENT CHIMNEY, TIME OF FRANCIS I., MORLAIX.



"A BRETON GIRL—EVENING," BY F. J. SKILL.



SCENE OF THE GUN-COTTON EXPLOSION AT STOWMARKET.

Leaves from a Sketch-Book.

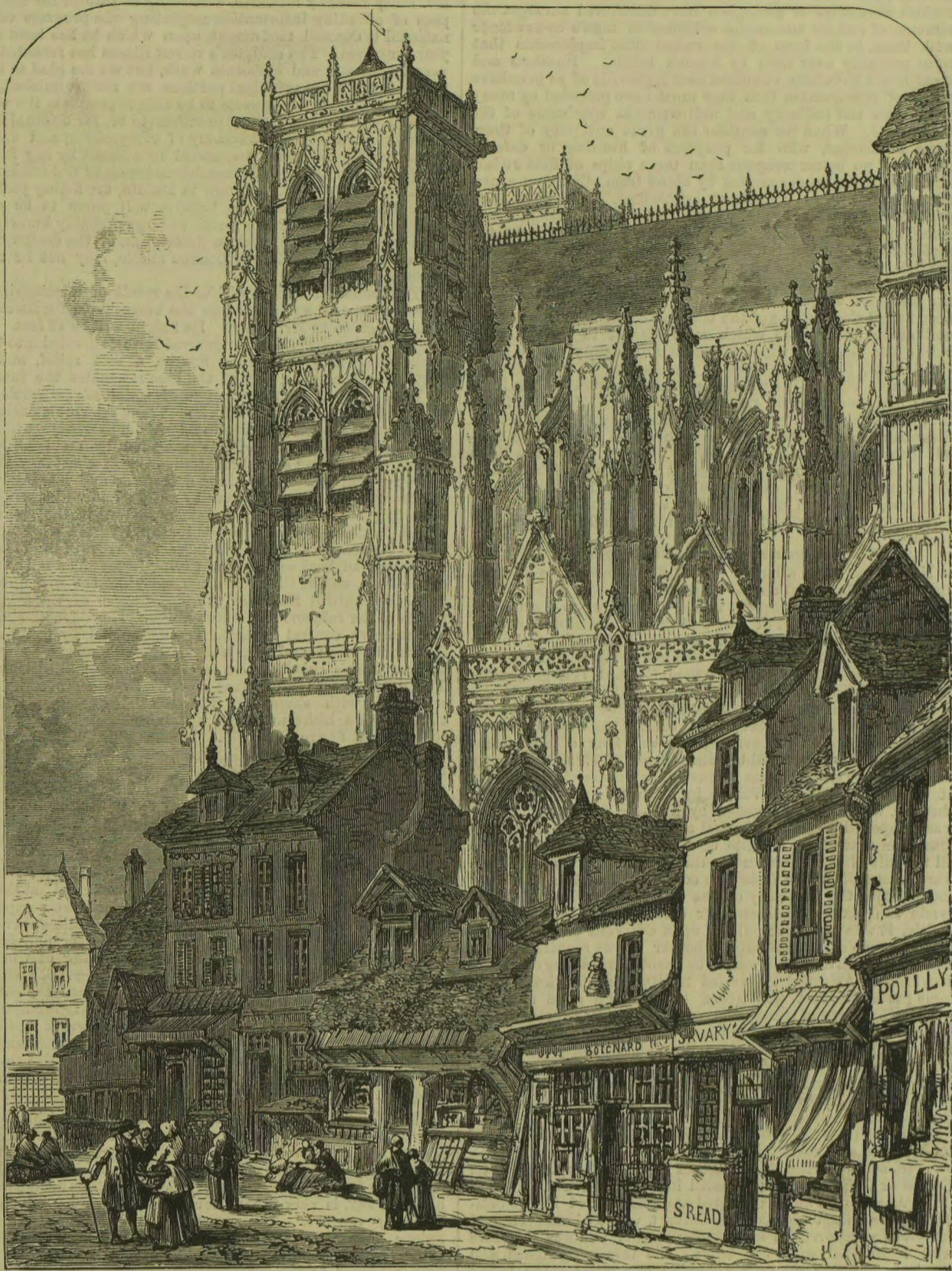
ABBEVILLE.

If Amiens has few attractions beyond its celebrated cathedral and the historic associations connected with its Hôtel de Ville, where the short-lived treaty of peace was signed in 1802, Abbeville, its sister city in Picardy, has still less to boast of; and it is improbable that many travellers would feel disposed to break the journey from Boulogne to Paris for even the few hours that might be spent in seeing all the treasures and antiquities it may contain. Situated in the fertile valley of the Somme, which here widens out into a broad river, and on the direct route to the capital, it cannot be called an out-of-the-way town, and it is a place of some commercial and manufacturing importance. It is, at least, just one of those places which are dear to the soul of the artist, abounding, as it does, in narrow streets, picturesque old houses, and dark archways, under which the Somme courses slowly and languidly, like the dull blood along the arteries of the aged and feeble. Such a place affords many a quaint morceau for the sketch-book, in its tumble-down houses and decaying gables, the fast-fading memorials of the wooden period of domestic architecture, when men seem to have reserved the treasures of their carved work in stone and marble for the temples of their faith, well content themselves to dwell in habitations which, however picturesque, would be the despair of the sanitary reformers and imperious ædiles of the present day. Then the cathedral—erected, possibly, in honour of some apocryphal saint, or as a receptacle for some still more doubtful relics—was everything, and the house nothing. Thus, whilst the most magnificent ecclesiastical buildings have been erected throughout Europe, and still tower above every town and city, at home and abroad, in almost imperishable grandeur and symmetry, there are not many secular edifices which have escaped the ravages of Time, with the exception of a few palaces and castles and the well-known guildhalls and hôtels de ville of the Middle Ages.

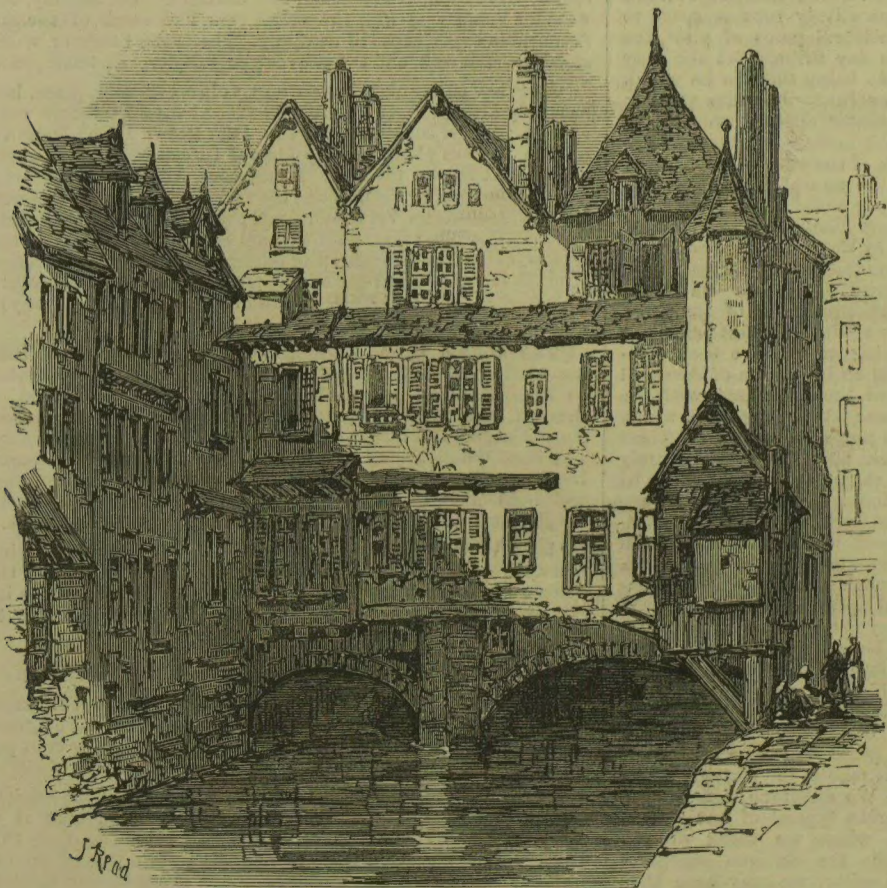
Abbeville, as its name implies, was originally only a manor attached to the abbey of St. Riquier, a local saint, who gave his name to a small town on one of the tributaries of the Somme. The celebrated Hugh Capet, son of Hugh the Great, the founder of a family which still survives and of a dynasty of which the world may hear something more before long, once resided here, and gave the importance of a fortified town to it about the close of the tenth century. It gradually increased in importance till it became only second to Amiens amongst the cities of Picardy. Louis XII., the three-months' husband of our Mary Tudor, under the advice of Cardinal d'Amboise caused the magnificent west front and part of the nave of the Cathedral of St. Wolfran to be built; and, though the original design was not completed, enough was accomplished to enable us to form an idea of the splendid church which it was originally intended to erect. The façade is a truly noble specimen of the flamboyant Gothic. It is covered with a profusion of the richest work, such as the facile chisel and delicate taste of the French masons seem to have delighted in achieving. This grand western front is flanked by two towers of great beauty, whilst the exterior of the clerestory of the nave, connected by flying buttresses and pinnacles with the walls of the side chapels of the aisle, all enriched with elaborate tracery, presents a view of singular elegance and grace. An illustration of the south-western angle of the cathedral is given, with the quaint and irregular, yet most picturesque, houses that nestle beneath the shade of St. Wolfran.

The other Engravings represent several old and characteristic houses which span various parts of the canal or river, and bear no inconsiderable resemblance to some similarly situated houses at Lincoln. Dark and weirdlike are they, and one cannot help speculating as to what their original inhabitants were, and whether this amphibious predilection encourages the "evolution" theory, that man has been derived from a fish, or whether this choice of a superaqueous habitation is a cropping out of the instinct that animated the lake-dwellers of a long-forgotten past, and still survives in the river-villages of China.

Here, in this valley of the Somme, we are on the haunts,



ST. WOLFRAN.



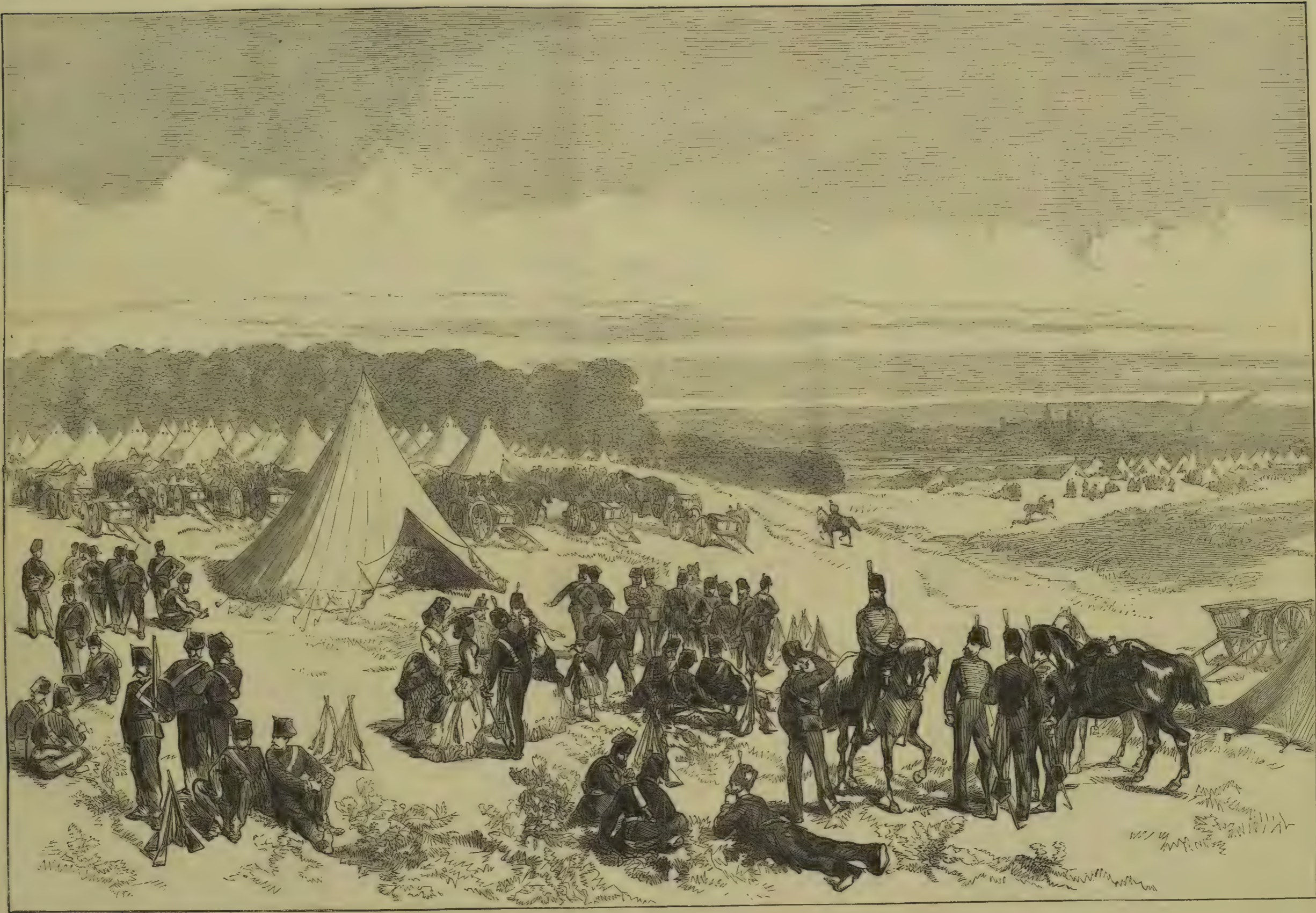
ON THE CANAL.



ON THE CANAL.



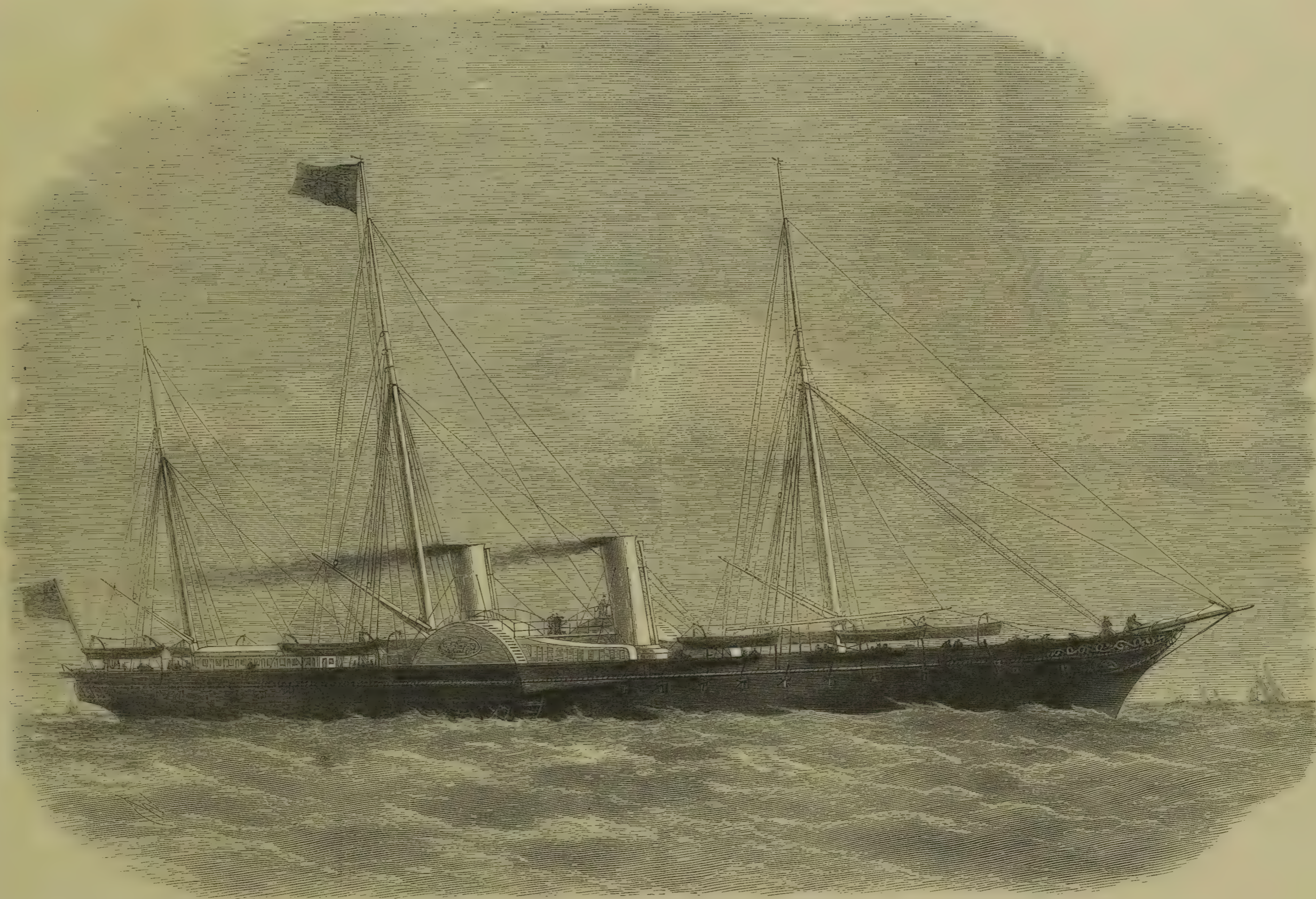
A PICNIC.



ENCAMPMENT OF THE PORTSMOUTH GARRISON.



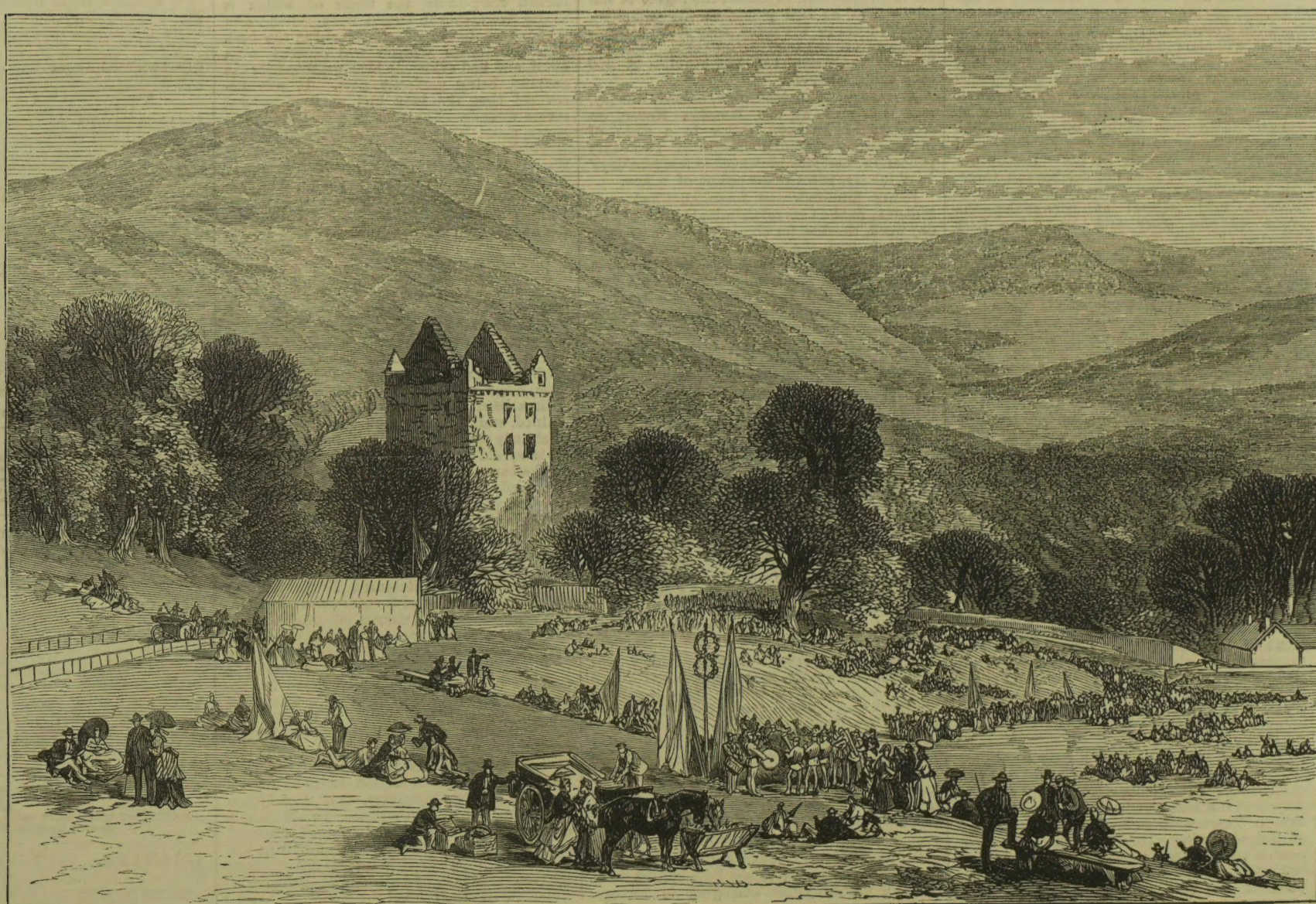
THE MONTHS: AUGUST.



THE PRINCE OF WALES'S NEW STEAM-YACHT OSBORNE.



SIGNOR MARIO.



THE SCOTT CENTENARY: FETE AT NEWARK CASTLE, SELKIRK.

